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It is apparent that the angular distance, after reaching a maximum at some time between 1905 and 1914, is now again approaching a minimum. This is much earlier than had been anticipated and makes it necessary to revise entirely our views as to the character of the orbit of the system. The two components differ in brightness by more than half a magnitude and there is little question but that the companion, whenever it has been visible, has been the following star of the two. Moreover, the measures do not show much change in the position angle.

It thus appears probable that the system completes an entire revolution in a period of approximately 20 years, the orbit being very eccentric and having a high inclination. The earlier measures favor this hypothesis, for they indicate maximum elongation at four epochs—sometime between 1845 and 1852, between 1883 and 1888, between 1905 and 1914 and about 1868—and they do not exclude the possibility of minimum separation (apparent occultation) about 1877 and 1857, tho definite evidence is lacking.

The motion of the system during the next two or three years will put this hypothesis to the test. The measures from 1898 to 1900, referred to above, define the time of the companion's reappearance with accuracy. If the same phenomenon is again observed, and the companion, when it reappears is again on the following side, the period of revolution will be known with precision, and a good determination of the orbit will be possible.

September, 1917.

ROBERT G. AITKEN.

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#### SPECTRUM OF WOLF'S COMET

Since Wolf's Comet—*b* 1916—did not turn out to be as bright an object as was expected, it seemed that it would be of interest to have its spectrum. An exposure for the spectrum of the comet was made here on the nights of August 25 and 26, 1917. It recorded chiefly a continuous spectrum. Even the strongest cometary emissions are faint; the cyanogen band at 3883 is weak, and the hydrocarbon band 4737 presents only a trace. The spectrum is too narrow and faint to decide definitely the presence of solar lines, but it indicates that the comet was shining by reflected sunlight.

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